

Florin Japanese American Citizens League
Oral History Project

Oral History Interview

with

ALICE YAEKO GOTO

December 3, 1992
Sacramento, California

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JAPANESE AMERICAN CITIZENS LEAGUE

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PREFACE

In the summer of 1987, a small group of people from the Florin JACL met at Mary and Al Tsukamoto's home to plan a new project for the organization. Because of the unique history of Florin, we felt that there were special stories that needed to be preserved. The town of Florin, California was once a thriving farming community with a large Japanese American population. The World War II internment of persons of Japanese ancestry living on the west coast, devastated the town and it never recovered. Today there is no town of Florin; it has been merged into the larger county of Sacramento. Many Japanese Americans who reside throughout the United States, however, have their origins from Florin, or have relatives and friends who once had ties to this community. The town may no longer exist, but the spirit of the community continues to survive in people's hearts and memories.

Several hours have been devoted to interviewing former Florin residents. The focus of the interviews was on the forced internment and life in the relocation camps, but our questions touched on other issues. We asked about their immigration to the United States from Japan, pre-war experiences, resettlement after the war and personal philosophies. We also wanted to record the stories of the people left behind. They were friends and neighbors who watched in anguish as the trains transported the community away.

We have conducted these interviews with feelings of urgency. If we are to come away with lessons from this historic tragedy, we must listen to and become acquainted with the people who were there. Many of these historians are in their 70's, 80's and 90's. We are grateful that they were willing to share their experiences and to answer our questions with openness and thoughtfulness.

We owe special thanks to James F. Carlson, former Assistant Dean of American River College and to Jackie Reinier, former Director of the Oral History Program at California State University in Sacramento. Without their enthusiasm, encouragement and expertise, we never could have produced this collection of oral histories. We also wish to acknowledge the project members, volunteers, the Florin JACL which contributed financial support, Sumitomo Bank for their corporate donation, and the Taisho Young Mens Association which contributed some of their assets as they dissolved their corporation on December 31, 1991.

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INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER

Mark Nakagawa was Pastor of the Sacramento Japanese United Methodist Church at the time of this interview. In 1994, he was appointed to the West Los Angeles United Methodist Church.

INTERVIEW TIME AND PLACE

December 3, 1992
1015 South Lee Avenue
Lodi, California 95240

TRANSCRIBING

Patricia Namba is a Florin JACL member and an active volunteer in many areas. She retired after many years of County work.

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PHOTOGRAPHER

Pictures were reproduced by Dan Inouye, Florin JACL member.

TAPES AND INTERVIEW RECORDS

Copies of the bound transcript and the tapes will be kept by the Florin Japanese American Citizens League and in the University Archives at the Library, California State University, Sacramento, 6000 J Street, Sacramento, California 95819.

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY
OF ALICE YAEKO GOTO

Alice Yaeko Goto was born in Florin, California, on March 21, 1912, to Kennosuke and Mikyo Yamada, immigrants from Hiroshima, Japan. The California Alien Land Law caused Mr. Yamada to purchase land in the names of adult Nisei friends because his own children were not yet adults. The grape vineyards were maintained with the help of Mrs. Yamada and the eight children.

Alice attended Florin Grammar School, a racially mixed school until she was in the fourth grade. The school was then segregated and only children of Japanese descent attended. (The grammar school remained a segregated school until 1938.) Alice graduated from the eighth grade and then attended the racially mixed Elk Grove High School. She was the pitcher on the girls baseball team, and drummer for the group that played at school dances. Following graduation from high school in 1930, Alice worked in a doctor's office as an office secretary, bill collector, nurse, and janitor.

Alice attended the Florin Japanese Methodist Church and was active in the Epworth League, an organization for young adults. Her father was actively involved in the program of the church. He transported the neighbors' children to the Sunday School, and housed many visiting ministers. Among the many ministers she met at her house was the Rev. Taro Goto, the young pastor of the Portland Japanese Methodist Church.

Alice and Taro Goto were married at the Florin Japanese Methodist Church on April 8, 1934. They lived for a short period in Portland until they were assigned by Dr. Frank Herron Smith, Superintendent of the Pacific Japanese Provisional Conference to Spokane Washington, serving there five years. They were then assigned to the Pine Methodist Church in San Francisco. Rev. Goto was proficient in both English and Japanese. They had two sons, Leo Taro born in 1935, and Marc Makoto in 1939.

On Sunday, December 7, 1941, Japan bombed Pearl Harbor. The lives of all people of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast changed. In addition to Alice's work as the minister's wife, the arrest of Issei church members and the evacuation orders of the United States government presented new challenges. Alice wrote and translated letters for women whose husbands were arrested by the FBI. Boxes of members' belongings were stored in the church basement, and Alice labeled and recorded them for easy retrieval by the caretaker. She had little time for the needs of herself and her family. The day the Goto family left to be interned at the Tanforan race track, Alice recalls having just their immediate clothing needs. The Goto family were moved from the horse stalls of Tanforan to the desolate desert of Topaz, Utah, a place where just walking about on the ash-like surface caused a dust-storm.

Many Christian ministers were targets of physical violence by those in sympathy with Japan in the internment camps. Rev. Goto's life was threatened, and the family was moved from Topaz by the government to Denver, Colorado. Rev. and Mrs. Goto worked with the Japanese Methodist Church, and often entertained the servicemen in attendance at the worship services. Dr. Smith then assigned the Gotos to the Ontario, Oregon area.

With Alice driving, Taro Goto delivered sermons in English and Japanese on a one hundred seventy five mile, five church circuit every Sunday. The next assignment returned them to the Spokane Church.

In 1949, the Rev. Taro Goto was the first Japanese person to be appointed Superintendent of the Pacific Japanese Provisional Conference of the Methodist Church. He served as Superintendent until the merger of the Provisional Conference with local conferences in 1964. With the traveling necessitated by the new position which covered nine western states, the Goto family moved to Lodi, California to be near Alice's folks. Her siblings were able to assist in the care of the boys as the need arose.

Alice became a member of the Lodi Methodist Church and sang in the choir for about thirty five years. Over the years, she also has served churches as Sunday School superintendent and teacher.

Rev. Taro Goto died on December 18, 1972 at the age of seventy. A telegram from President Nixon was among the many condolence messages received. Alice is alone now, but her son Leo and daughter-in-law Naomi live in Sacramento, and son Marc lives in Concord. Alice is unable to continue her much loved singing in the choir because of her arthritis.

The following is a quote from the Oral History narrative of Alice Goto.

"War is sad. Nobody wins. And evacuation is sad, too. . .
but many of the young people rose above this experience.
They became persons that contribute so much and learned
to walk the second mile."

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY
OF TARO GOTO
ADDENDUM TO THE ORAL HISTORY OF ALICE GOTO

Taro Goto was born in Otaru, Hokkaido, Japan, in 1902, the first child of Katsuji and Taki Goto, who had moved from Kumamoto to help in the opening of Japan's northern frontier in Hokkaido. Katsuji had taken the Goto name because there were no sons in the Goto family. After an unsuccessful attempt as a merchant and gold miner, Katsuji was sent to America in 1914 by a mining company with an exhibit for the World's Fair in San Francisco. He remained in America, living in temporary housing at the Japanese Methodist Church in Fresno, California with other "single" men. They labored in the grape fields or became gardeners.

In 1919, Katsuji Goto went to Japan and returned to America with his family. They lived in a little house in the vineyards of Fresno with Taki's mother. Grandmother Goto had come to America earlier with her husband and another daughter, Harue, who married Mr. Masaoka and had moved to Utah. The Goto children at the time of immigration were Taro, 17, Kimiko, 14, Tamiko, 10, and Masaji, 6. Two girls, Himeko Lillian and Aiko Julia, were born in Fresno.

In Japan, Taro Goto had been a very good student in school where he learned a little about American government and history. His hero was Abraham Lincoln. Although he learned some English, he was unable to

speak it well at that time and he desired to study abroad. This desire for education, the rising militarism and conscription in Japan, and the family's immigration to America gave him an opportunity to study in the United States. He attended Murphy Institute in Tennessee, and took additional courses at the University of North Carolina, University of Chicago, and University of Missouri where he was a special student in Sociology. To support himself, he took a variety of part time jobs including work as a salesman, waiter, bartender, and maker of children's toys for an art shop in Chicago. His use of the English language improved greatly, with an added Bostonian accent.

Taro's passion for skiing in Japan shifted in adult life to that of a passion of service to the Japanese community as a Methodist minister. While a youth in Japan, he had attended a Dutch-Reformed Presbyterian Church. After years of education in various universities, he entered the ministry in 1931, and served Japanese churches in Portland, Spokane, and San Francisco. World War II began December 7, 1941, and all persons of Japanese ancestry on the West Coast were interned in 1942. Reverend Goto and other Christian ministers were called upon to provide leadership during those difficult days. Among Taro's responsibilities was to assist the evacuees in San Francisco, and later to meet and orient new train loads of families to Topaz, Utah, one of the ten relocation centers. From camp, the Goto family moved to churches in Denver, Ontario, Oregon, and Spokane, Washington before finally settling in Lodi, California.

In 1949, the Reverend Taro Goto was named Superintendent of the Pacific Japanese Provisional Conference of the Methodist Church. He had

oversight responsibilities for thirty churches in nine western states. He held this post for fifteen years until the merger of the Provisional Conference into various Annual Conferences of the Western Jurisdiction of the Methodist Church. After the merger in 1964, Rev. Goto turned his attention to the needs of Issei members of the Japanese churches in California and officially retired in 1968. He continued to serve various churches as a Japanese language minister until his death in 1972.

Leo Goto, in a brief history of his father, writes, "Who was Taro Goto? He was absent minded at times, and definitely not a handy person around the house. But he was a good administrator, consensus builder, scholar, and orator. Above all, he was a man of God."

[This brief history was compiled from information received from Taro Goto's son Leo Goto, Sacramento, California, and youngest sister Julia Aiko Goto Ohki, Livingston, California.]

[Session 1, December 3, 1992]

[Begin Tape 1, Side 1]

NAKAGAWA: This is an interview for the Florin JACL Oral History Interview Project. The interviewer is Mark Nakagawa. The interviewee is Mrs. Alice Yaeko Goto. The date of this interview is Wednesday, December 3, 1992, and it is approximately 2:00 p.m. in the afternoon. The interview is being conducted in the home of Mrs. Goto. Her address is 1015 South Lee Avenue. Lee is spelled L-E-E, Lodi, California. Zip code is 95240. Telephone number is Area code 209-368-1506. Also sitting in on this interview is Courtney Goto, who is a granddaughter of Mrs. Alice Goto. We are going to stop now for sound check.

[Interruption]

NAKAGAWA: The sound check is completed. We are now going to begin the interview.

Mrs. Goto, you were born in Florin in the early part of the century, 1912. Could you share with us some of your fond memories about growing up as a child in Florin, from early childhood all the way up to your high school days?

GOTO: Okay. I went to Florin Grammar School which was about a good mile walk from my home to the school. Every day we had to walk to school. I think up to about the third or fourth grade it was mixed, different races. But after that, when I was in the fourth grade I think, they had a prejudice and they separate the schools. So we went to an all Japanese student school, and then they had to build a little school for the Caucasians at Florin School. But we had a good time playing baseball. Our teacher, Mr. Taylor, was the principal. He had a little Ford and he would pack all of us in that little car and take us all over to play baseball. We were a good team.

NAKAGAWA: When you say "we", that means all the Japanese?

GOTO: Yes, the whole Japanese students that were playing--girls only team. I was the pitcher. And then during that time, they flunked all the Japanese students one year, and passed even the ones (Caucasian students) that weren't very smart. You know, they passed.

NAKAGAWA: Non-Japanese students, they passed.

GOTO: Yes, non-Japanese all went on, and all the Japanese, whether they were "A" students or not, they flunked.

Let's see, what else you want to know.

NAKAGAWA: And then, but there was a time, I believe, when that practice stopped. Or how long did that practice continue? Was it just that one year?

GOTO: No, all through. It was my fourth grade it was together. And then from fifth on to when I graduated, it still was separated. So I don't know when they got all together again. I don't remember.

NAKAGAWA: But I mean the flunking of the Japanese students, was that just one year only?

GOTO: Oh, yes! That particular year.

NAKAGAWA: Do you think you can recall what year that was? What grade you would have been in?

GOTO: I was in the fourth grade.

NAKAGAWA: Ah! So the Japanese boys and girls all got flunked that one year?

GOTO: Yes, that one year.

NAKAGAWA: Even yourself?

GOTO: No, they didn't. I guess they forgot me. They didn't flunk me, and I must passed when I was second grade because all through after that my brother was two years ahead of me, but we went through rest of the school days together. All through high school, too.

NAKAGAWA: Even though you attended segregated schools--the Japanese were at one school and the *hakujins* (Caucasians) were at

the other school--did you still associate with the *hakujin* kids? For example, after school? Did you play games or any kind of activity?

GOTO: No, nothing like that that I can remember. We went as a team. Baseball team went to other school to play with the mixed school.

NAKAGAWA: Do you remember, Mrs. Goto, the year 1924 when the alien land laws were passed? Do you recall that having any effect on your family or the Issei families in Florin?

GOTO: This is when I was about twelve, right? 1924?

NAKAGAWA: Right. Right. Do you recall your dad or your parents saying anything about that law?

GOTO: I remember my father had to use other people's names. I guess his children were not old enough so he had to use somebody else's children who were older, their name, so that he could keep the property. Things like that I noticed, but then, other than that I didn't know.

NAKAGAWA: So, your father was a farmer in Florin?

GOTO: Yes.

NAKAGAWA: What did he raise?

GOTO: We had grapes, you know, and we lost all that practically when the war broke out.

NAKAGAWA: Okay. We will get to the war in a little bit. Did your father have other Japanese laborers on the farm or did he hire non-Japanese laborers?

GOTO: I don't remember my father hiring any worker because there were a lot of us. He had eight children, and my mother saw to it that we worked hard.

NAKAGAWA: Wow! So you went out...

GOTO: We went out to work early in the morning before school. Certain seasons we had to do things while the dew is on the vine. But I don't remember, well, maybe earlier when I was small, they used to have strawberries. And at that time maybe he had some helpers, but I don't remember those days.

NAKAGAWA: Okay. Do you remember the names of other Japanese families around you who farmed, also?

GOTO: Yes. we had the good friends with a lot of children, Mr. E. Sakakibara, and then further up, there was Mr. and Mrs. Seno with lots of children. I guess Yasui is one. No, not Yasui. Mr. and Mrs. Masuda were right behind our house. And Murakami was on further... other road to go to from my place. And there were few *hakujins* at different part of the street. Those are the closest friends I have. They are still my good friends.

NAKAGAWA: That makes me want to ask you, Mrs. Goto, even though you and the other Japanese children had to attend segregated schools, and assuming that there was a lot of, probably a lot of overt prejudice, still, how often, or did your paths cross with a lot of non-Japanese in the Florin area. Like for business purposes or social reasons. Or did pretty much the Japanese stay one side of the street and the *hakujins* stay on the other?

GOTO: Well, no. Florin was kind of mixed. They had a grocery store run by a *hakujin* and then some by Japanese, too. And we do shop at that type of place, too. But, of course, there was the Akiyama Store that mother always bought things. I remember one time when I was a little girl, mother told me to buy a loaf of bread. I had forgotten just where I bought that, but anyway, I took it home and then she said this is a day old bread. So, I had to walk back a mile and get a fresh bread. I remember that.

NAKAGAWA: And you bought that at the Japanese store?

GOTO: I think so.

NAKAGAWA: [Laughter]

GOTO: I think I bought that one at the Japanese store. It's been a long, long time.

NAKAGAWA: Right! Tell me, at the end of the grape season when the grapes are harvested, where did your father take the grapes?

GOTO: I think he used to take to a shed where they gather all the grapes, and I don't know who had that part, whether the Japanese men took care or *hakujin*. I don't remember because I never did go.

NAKAGAWA: Right.

GOTO: But they used to deliver to that place in the truck and somebody would come by and pick those up and deliver for my father.

NAKAGAWA: It strikes me, Mrs. Goto, that around the time you were in high school, that would have been, say 1929, 1930, right around there. Two very important events were happening around that time. One was the depression here in the United States. Well, I guess all over the world, but especially here in the United States. But also, internationally, that was about the time that Japan was becoming very militaristic in the far east. How did these two events affect your life and the lives of other Japanese in Florin?

GOTO: Well, the only thing I remember is I couldn't go on to school any more, but my brother got to go to business school because he is a boy. But me, I had to work and help out as much as I can. So I started to work in Sacramento after high school and did some nursing work at the office.

I was a bill collector. I was a nurse mending people, and I was a janitor. I did everything.

NAKAGAWA: Now, where was this at again?

GOTO: In Sacramento.

NAKAGAWA: In Sacramento?

GOTO: Yes, a doctor who is a well known physician, I worked for him. And at that time he was helping me try to be a surgical nurse. But I didn't follow up. I had to quit after four years and got married.

NAKAGAWA: Now, I am curious. This may sound like a very naive question, but when you went to and from work every day, what was your mode of transportation?

GOTO: Oh! I lived in Sacramento with my sister most of the time. But afterward, I travelled back and forth from Florin. My father had a car so I used his car.

NAKAGAWA: You were pretty liberated then.

GOTO: [Laughter] Well, I don't know, but. . .

NAKAGAWA: Do you remember what type of car it was?

GOTO: It was a Chevrolet.

NAKAGAWA: Chevrolet?

GOTO: Yes, a Chevrolet. But I remember my father had an old truck called Bim. B-I-M. I have never seen one like that before nor afterwards. But with that car, my father used to

pick up all the neighbors' children and take them to Sunday school. Every Sunday, we had to go to church.

NAKAGAWA: And that was the Florin Japanese Methodist Church?

GOTO: Right! Right.

NAKAGAWA: Okay, great!

We are going to stop at this point for a sound check.

[Interruption]

NAKAGAWA: The sound check has been completed and we are now going to resume the interview.

Mrs. Goto, could you continue telling us about your high school years there in Florin?

GOTO: Sure. During my high school days we had, of course, a girls baseball team, too. And I was the baseball pitcher for high school for four years, and I was very active. Besides baseball, I used to play tennis and we had a little girls dance music (band). We used to play music for the school dance. I was the drummer, and I played the drum for dances.

NAKAGAWA: This was a school group?

GOTO: High school. Yes, during the high school different people have dance time. Then we play the music.

NAKAGAWA: Then this was at Elk Grove High School?

GOTO: Elk Grove High School, yes. And that was just our hobby. More like a hobby, so it was all free. And then, I enjoyed high school very much because I had a chance to mix with

GOTO: some Caucasians and I had a very good friend, Hazel Latta, who was a polio student. After high school she went her way and I went my way and I hadn't seen her for forty years or so. I moved to Lodi in 1949. And then they were building next door, an apartment. Later on new tenants moved in and they bought that place, the apartment. And it was Hazel that moved in there. We talked about it. We remembered our high school days, and she had polio so she was handicapped, but that didn't stop her at all. I really admired her. She was high school student body secretary/treasurer for all the time we were there. I was so glad to see her after she moved next door.

I usually bake a cake or pie or something and go and introduce myself and welcome all my neighbors to my neighborhood so that's how I found out that was Hazel that I used to go to high school together. And then finally I had her join my Methodist Church in Lodi.

NAKAGAWA: That's great!

GOTO: She passed away a few years ago and my minister and I gave the eulogy at her funeral because I was the only one that knew her so long.

NAKAGAWA: Right! Yes. That leads me to ask you, Mrs. Goto, your friend Hazel had polio. I have read articles and I have also heard this from some of the long time residents of Florin,

that a lot of children, or maybe not a lot, but a pretty fair number of children, including Japanese children who grew up in Florin, had either polio or tuberculosis. Do you recall?

GOTO: I recall a lot of people had tuberculosis.

NAKAGAWA: Tuberculosis?

GOTO: Yes. But I don't recall Caucasians because we didn't mingle with them too much except when I started going to high school. But during that time, during the war time, I came back to California because I had a sister at the hospital. And then I met my old friend that I went to school with. Same grade, too, and I addressed her and she looked as if she never met me before.

NAKAGAWA: Is that right?

GOTO: There were people like that. But then, there were other people who will go all the way to make you comfortable, but at that time I met such people like that. I thought, well, I didn't need that kind of girl to be my friend. [Chuckles]

NAKAGAWA: Right! You also met someone else in high school, right?

GOTO: Right.

NAKAGAWA: Your husband.

GOTO: Right! [Laughter] Yes, I met him one time. Reverend Tsuda came by. Well, I was through with high school and I was working at that time when I met my husband. He came

GOTO: by to pick up Reverend Tsuda at my father's home because my father used to house all the speakers or ministers that came by to meet us. I mean to speak at our church. And he always have them stay at my place, my father's home. So that time, Taro, my husband came down to pick him up, and he saw me, and he asked Reverend Tsuda about me. And Reverend Tsuda said, "Oh, she will be a good wife for you." [Laughter] That is how come. So he was kind of man that introduced us. But of course, I said "Hello" and I left right away because I was on the way to work.

NAKAGAWA: You had more important things to think about, right?

GOTO: Right! [Laughter]

But that is how we got to know, and then we wrote for half a year, and in-between times he would come to Sacramento to see me. He called the doctor where I was working one time and he said, well, I answered the phone and sounded like a patient needed a doctor's call so I asked my doctor that he had to make a house call at this certain hotel. When he came back from the hospital he said, "What a patient! He has heart trouble!" And that was Taro. [Laughter] Wanted to ask the doctor about me, I guess.

NAKAGAWA: Not the kind of heart trouble you were probably thinking about. [Laughter]

GOTO: No, no no. Doctor said it was a heart patient that he had to go and see. Not really a patient, you know, but he wanted to ask him. They were related, after all. Dr. Iki and Taro.

NAKAGAWA: Is that so?

GOTO: Yes

NAKAGAWA: Okay

GOTO: I found that out afterward. I didn't know at that time.

NAKAGAWA: Dr. Iki?

GOTO: Yes, Dr. Iki.

NAKAGAWA: How do you spell that last name?

GOTO: I-K-I. Berkeley graduate.

NAKAGAWA: Oh, okay.

GOTO: And his wife is Madame Shimosumi Hanako, She was a famous opera singer.

NAKAGAWA: Right.

GOTO: She sang in San Francisco and San Carlos for many years. Member of that. So she sang for our wedding.

NAKAGAWA: I was going to ask you, how soon after this house call did you get married?

GOTO: Oh, gee! We wrote letters for about half a year, so I guess over a year.

NAKAGAWA: After that time?

- GOTO: Yes, I think so, because I don't remember. I remember writing him, but maybe a year or so.
- NAKAGAWA: What was your husband or your husband-to-be, I should say, doing at this point in his life? Was he still in school, or was he farming?
- GOTO: No, when I met him he was in Portland Methodist Church. I think he was there for a couple of years.
- NAKAGAWA: As the pastor?
- GOTO: As the pastor. That was the first church that he had. And then, when we got married we were sent to Spokane church.
- NAKAGAWA: He was sent there by the bishop, right?
- GOTO: Yes, yes.
- NAKAGAWA: Who was the bishop then?
- GOTO: I don't remember the bishop, but then the superintendent was Smith.
- NAKAGAWA: Smith?
- GOTO: Frank Herron Smith.
- NAKAGAWA: Dr. Frank Herron Smith.
- GOTO: Yes. Of course I didn't know about bishop those days.
- NAKAGAWA: [Laughter] Lot of people these days don't care to know about bishops [laughter] either. So that would have been Dr. Frank Herron Smith?

- GOTO: Yes, that sent us, you know. We had to come to the conference, and superintendent had lot of power those days. They didn't have to talk too much to the bishop, I guess.
- NAKAGAWA: Right. So then, actually you and your husband were married in the Florin church.
- GOTO: Yes.
- NAKAGAWA: And then from there you went to Portland where he was pastor and there only for a short time.
- GOTO: Yes, for a couple of months I was there, so I don't know Portland too well.
- NAKAGAWA: And then from Portland you went to Spokane?
- GOTO: Yes.
- NAKAGAWA: And you were there for how long?
- GOTO: About five years. And then we had to go to San Francisco church.
- NAKAGAWA: So that would have been Pine Methodist?
- GOTO: Pine Methodist Church. We were sent there until the war broke out. So we were there for four or five years.
- NAKAGAWA: At that time it was on Pine Street, correct?
- GOTO: Yes, yes. On Pine Street.
- NAKAGAWA: You know, I have to ask you because I studied this and I am very interested in this part of Japanese American history. Did you know for exanple, or did you ever meet Kanichi

Miyama? He was the father of the gospel society which later became Pine Church.

GOTO: I don't know those days at all because that was what, 1938? When we went to Spokane first, it was 1934, and my oldest son was born there.

NAKAGAWA: That was Leo, right?

GOTO: Yes. Then we went to San Francisco. I think four or five years after Spokane, so we were there till war broke out.

NAKAGAWA: So probably at that time, the Gospel Society was, well, it had become Pine Church, so different scene then.

GOTO: Seems like lots of ministers didn't want to go to Spokane. I mean to San Francisco.

NAKAGAWA: Why is that?

GOTO: Because that is the city that most speakers come from Japan and give good talk, and then tour all over the United States and on the way back to Japan they stop over our church in San Francisco and give a talk. So it seems like all the members' ears is really [chuckles] what do you call it, potent?

NAKAGAWA: Potent. [Laughter] Okay.

GOTO: But anyway, some of the people didn't like to go there.

NAKAGAWA: Lot of the Japanese ministers.

GOTO: Yes.

NAKAGAWA: Oh, okay.

GOTO: They have the idea, I guess, but of course Taro was, we were just young and just starting out. He like to have anything that challenges him.

NAKAGAWA: Right! I was going to say he was brave. He didn't mind the competition.

GOTO: No, he likes anything that challenges him.

NAKAGAWA: Oh, gosh!

GOTO: We went there, and of course, when I was in Spokane our salary. . . we had to teach Japanese to students and that was part of our salary because it was a missionary school and they couldn't afford to pay all the salary. So usually the student went to Spokane, a small church.

NAKAGAWA: I see.

GOTO: But while we were there, that church became an independent church. We got the church started as a Methodist Church. Until then it was like a Sunday school only, and we had a couple of missionaries that really helped out keeping the Sunday school together. But we didn't have any Issei members, so we had to work from scratch. And then, we were sent back there twice.

NAKAGAWA: Spokane?

GOTO: Yes. After the war, whoever was serving that church had to be relieved. Old Frank Smith died. Dr. Herron Smith died so somebody had to fill his shoes, so they chose this

Caucasian man. He was a missionary so he spoke both languages and his name was Cobb, I think.

NAKAGAWA: John Cobb?

GOTO: John Cobb.

NAKAGAWA: Wow!

GOTO: So he became superintendent from Spokane, so they told Spokane people they will get anybody you like, so we were picked. So they want Taro to go back to Spokane, so we went there two times.

NAKAGAWA: So you personally knew John Cobb?

GOTO: I didn't know him.

NAKAGAWA: Actually, that would have been John Cobb, Sr. You know, his son, John Cobb, Jr. is a retired professor at a School of Theology at Claremont.

GOTO: I think it's the father.

NAKAGAWA: Is it the father?

GOTO: Yes. Elderly retired.

NAKAGAWA: Right. And the fact Reverend Hanaoka at our church now, his father was taught English in Japan by John Cobb, Sr.

GOTO: Is that right? Oh!

NAKAGAWA: Right! And when Reverend Hanaoka was pastor of Alameda United Methodist Church back in the seventies, the minister who preceded him there was John Cobb, Jr.

GOTO: Is that right?

NAKAGAWA: Right! Right. And well, this is fantastic!

GOTO: Small world.

So we went to Spokane, and we were there another four or five years until 1949 when Taro became Superintendent from Spokane church so we have to move to Lodi. I moved to Lodi because my folks lived there. My brother and sister lived there, so when I traveled with Taro, somebody can watch my boys. That was the only reason I moved here.

NAKAGAWA: Since your husband had the courage and the guts to go to San Francisco he became Superintendent, you know.
[Laughter] So all those other guys missed when they had a chance and good opportunity. [Laughter]

GOTO: Yes, well.

NAKAGAWA: Let me ask you about one more person, about another family you may have known back then. The Abiko family.

GOTO: Abiko?

NAKAGAWA: They were the family that founded the Nichibei Shimbun.
(Japanese vernacular newspaper)

GOTO: In San Francisco?

NAKAGAWA: In San Francisco, right.

GOTO: I don't know that family. I think war broke out too soon.
We had to, you know, evacuate.

NAKAGAWA: Right.

GOTO: And at that time when the war broke out. . . you want me to talk about when the war broke out?

NAKAGAWA: Keep going. Well, let's keep going.

GOTO: Okay. Well, we were in San Francisco. I've forgotten whether it was a Sunday that war broke out, or--of course, you weren't even here on this earth.

NAKAGAWA: It was Sunday, December 7th, 1941.

GOTO: Was it Sunday? I remember when we. . . After the church we went back and found out on the radio that war broke out.

NAKAGAWA: Now, this would have been in Pine Church, San Francisco?

GOTO: San Francisco, while we were in Pine Church. We went to chapel, and we offered a prayer to forgive Japan for, you know, attacking us, and to whoever in this country I wanted to ask God to protect them, and then soon after that we weren't supposed to have a flashlight, nor radio. They all confiscate those radios.

NAKAGAWA: All those items.

GOTO: Yes.

NAKAGAWA: Anything having to do with communication they took away from you.

GOTO: Yes, they took away all that. We were not supposed to have flash light. And then time came that we had to evacuate. Before that, so many people were sent to Bismarck, and

Montana, to a concentration camp--those who were teaching Japanese, or something to do with a Japanese club or Buddhist priest.

NAKAGAWA: Anyone who was suspected of espionage or contact with the Japanese government.

GOTO: Yes. Right! Right! So some of my friends, their husband was in camp because business was in camp and they can't write Japanese to communicate. They have to be written in English, so I was busy writing a letter for this lady about their family and children, how they were getting along, to her husband. I have to write the letter for her, that she could send it in. Anyway, she gets a letter back, she brings it over and I have to interpret that letter to her. So, I was busy that way. And then, pretty soon, I think our church was the only one that gathered all the members. Taro said to all the members, not the big furnitures but immediate small valuable things, put it in a box. Like, if they have kitchen utensils he told them to put it in a box and label it. And if it is for the kitchen, you know, put down the Box Number One Kitchen, and Number Two, whatever, clothing. And they brought them in our church basement and I was busy keeping tab of those different people bringing boxes and boxes of belongings. I didn't have time to do anything for me.

NAKAGAWA: For you.

GOTO: For me. So that day I left, my boys just had immediate clothing. And then my good neighbor, Mr. Kusunoki lived next door to us. He put initials on our boys' sleeping bags. My boys had sleeping bags. He was a not a seamstress, he does crochet work I mean. . .

[End Tape 1, Side 1]

[Begin Tape 1, Side 2]

NAKAGAWA: We are continuing the interview with Mrs. Alice Goto. This is December 3, 1992 at the home of Mrs. Goto. The tape ran out on the other side which is why our conversation was cut off. We are now on Side Two of the cassette, and we will continue the interview at this point.

Mrs. Goto, we were talking about Mr. Kusunoki before the tape ran out. You mentioned that he did embroidery work, and he embroidered the names of your two sons on their sleeping bags as you were preparing for the evacuation.

GOTO: I was busy, and Mr. Kusunoki was busy, and my husband was busy gathering all the belongings. Not the furniture or big things, but just important pieces. We asked them (the members who were to evacuate) to put things in a box and number them so that we could identify whenever they want those boxes to be shipped. And then, I had many

members' belongings piled up in our church basement. I had them all labeled with alphabetic and numbered, and they gave me a piece of paper that had the number of their boxes so that I would know what they were talking about, and they had theirs, too. So during the war time when they wanted certain boxes they would send that letter to our caretaker and I'm sure they got their belongings through the army.

NAKAGAWA: I see. You mentioned Dr. Frank Herron Smith who was the Superintendent of the Conference, The Provisional Conference then. He is remembered by a lot of Isseis because, not because he spoke Japanese, although he did, but because he is the only Methodist Church official at that point in time, who publicly spoke out against the internment and the evacuation. No other Methodist Church official or government official as far as that goes, within California or outside spoke out publicly against internment except one. And that was the governor of the State of Colorado at that time, Governor Carr, who spoke out publicly against internment, and who subsequently lost the election, I'm sure because of that.

GOTO: Oh, is that right? Well, during our time in San Francisco we had close Methodist ministers, you know. We used to get together. And then, when we evacuated to Tanforan,

Taro asked. . . he later on became bishop after Tippet. He became a bishop and what was the bishop's name?

NAKAGAWA: Donald Harvey Tippet?

GOTO: He was our bishop. And then after he passed away or retired, then who became our bishop?

NAKAGAWA: Frank Herron Smith?

GOTO: No. Who became our bishop?

NAKAGAWA: After Bishop Tippet?

GOTO: (It was Stuart.) He was a bishop of other. . . maybe he was in Colorado.

NAKAGAWA: He might have gone to another conference.

GOTO: Yes, but he was very helpful. I'm sorry, I can't even recall his name. But he was very helpful. He brought a lot of things in where no one else could go out to get those things. You know, like Taro wanted to start a school. Children, you know, were just taken out of public schools and they just had nothing else to do but throw rocks at the few birds, you know, in the pond. There were birds. Ducks in the pond. They were just throwing rocks at the the birds, ducks. So Taro had lots of pencils and papers and things like that brought in so they could start the school for the children.

NAKAGAWA: Well, where did your family get evacuated to after Tanforan?

GOTO: After Tanforan, we went to Topaz.

NAKAGAWA: You were in Topaz?

GOTO: Utah.

NAKAGAWA: Utah. So you were there during the entire war?

GOTO: We were there. . . . No, Taro's life was threatened so we had to evacuate. There is a book Reverend Shimada wrote. . .

NAKAGAWA: Stone Cries Out?

GOTO: Yes. Stone Cries Out. In it he has mentioned something about Taro being a target, and he was the number two man that was next on the list.

NAKAGAWA: Actually, a lot of the Christian ministers were targeted because they were perceived as giving bad advice to the young Niseis who were thinking about the draft.

GOTO: Yes, that's right.

NAKAGAWA: In fact, Reverend John Yamasaki, the retired Episcopal minister in Los Angeles was beaten up in Jerome.

GOTO: Oh, really? Is that right?

NAKAGAWA: Lester Suzuki writes about this in his book. And in fact, recently there has been an art exhibit, (I'm doing all the talking) at the Japanese American National Museum in Los Angeles and there was a Nisei artist who at that time drew a painting of someone getting beaten up, and I think he titled it "Reverend Yamasaki Gets Beaten Up In Camp" or something like that.

GOTO: Well, Taro said at that time that if they really wanted to beat him, they had all the occasion to do so. But I guess, he said they didn't really want to hurt him because he was coming out of the bath room and he was wearing one of these wooden *geta* (clogs), and he couldn't run very fast, so if they really wanted to hit him they would have.

NAKAGAWA: They would have had him right there.

GOTO: Right there. But no, he ran all the way home and he opened the door and closed the door and then this fella, he had one of these army clothing on, covered with clothes that they get for free, so they couldn't see him, but he lashed on the window and broke it.

NAKAGAWA: On your barrack?

GOTO: On the barrack door. He had all the chance before that, you see, but no, he waited until Taro closed the door and then he slammed on the door and broke the window on the door.

NAKAGAWA: Let me ask you something, Mrs. Goto, that I've always been tempted to ask, but I guess never have found the right person to ask. And I guess you're probably the person who could answer this. It seems to me that most of the ministers who were threatened or beaten up in the camps were the Christian ministers.

GOTO: Yes.

NAKAGAWA: Whereas the Buddhist priests and the others are the Shinto priests, they weren't harmed at all. Why do you think that was?

GOTO: Well, I remember one Sunday, it was Lincoln's birthday that Sunday and Taro talked about Lincoln. The sermon was Abraham Lincoln, and then of course, its all nothing about pro-Japan, you see, and those people I guess were all pro-Japan, people that want to do away with anybody that talks about America, anything good about America is targeted.

NAKAGAWA: In other words, then there was in a lot of the people's minds then, that there was a connection between being Christian and being pro-American. Okay, yeah.

GOTO: I think so. We were whisked out of there overnight.

NAKAGAWA: From Topaz?

GOTO: Topaz. Because they didn't want anything to happen to him.

NAKAGAWA: And these were the government officials?

GOTO: Yes.

NAKAGAWA: Now, did you ask to be taken out or they. . .

GOTO: No, they. . .

NAKAGAWA: They knew you were being threatened.

GOTO: Yes. I think so, because right away they were there to protect us. So I don't know whether we stayed overnight or

GOTO: not. But we were whisked out of there and we went far as . . . we were supposed to go as far as Chicago because Taro said that, well, a lot of the people, Issei will go back to like places where they don't have to evacuate, but Nisei will go out that way so he thought he'd go out there and help them. So, we had tickets as far as Chicago, but we got off at Denver because there was a conference, our Annual Conference. We were in Denver for half a year without any pay because, that church. . . Taro started a Nisei church and we had a good time in Denver.

Every Sunday, we kind of lived with the offering they gave to the church, and from that offering we were supposed to live on it. But every Sunday morning, Taro would look at the audience, and he saw one soldier and he'd invite him over for lunch. "Have lunch with us." I was singing in the choir and I snuck out right after that and I started cooking.

NAKAGAWA: Was this soldier a Nisei?

GOTO: One soldier was a Nisei, and he was from Davenport, Washington. His father had a restaurant in Washington and he was a young soldier learning Japanese in Denver as a soldier. There were many other soldiers. The next Sunday we counted, I'm singing in the choir, and "Oh, there's three of them." So I'd go out right away and I'd start cooking

because Taro would say. "We want to invite you for lunch."
You know how many we had the most on Sunday for
lunch? There were seventeen men

NAKAGAWA: Wow!

GOTO: So they asked me afterward, what did you feed them? I said,
"Well, I had to cook something that I could stretch, and like
I would have chow mein." We were on ration during that
time.

NAKAGAWA: This is still during the war?

GOTO: During the war time. So we couldn't just go out and buy
anything. But anyway, at the most we had seventeen
people at lunch.

NAKAGAWA: Now, these soldiers would come in uniform?

GOTO: Yes.

NAKAGAWA: They wouldn't be carrying weapons, though.

GOTO: No, they were all Japanese students, I mean learning
Japanese.

NAKAGAWA: So they were in the Military Intelligence Service?

GOTO: Yes, they were all Intelligence people, military. And then,
on the very last Sunday, there were about twenty five
military men that ate with us one time or other. Weekday,
I invited until they make a friend and get invited out. And
then, when we were shipped back to Ontario, Oregon, they
gave us a farewell party. That evening there were twenty

GOTO: five soldiers that came to the last service and they sang two Japanese songs. They were mostly *hakujin*. Only one Japanese boy, Frank Suzuki. He is a very good friend of mine. One Chinese. I remember his name. His name was Wong, and he was a big fellow. I don't remember seeing any black men in the service, but I remember those two orientals. All the others were Caucasians. One Sunday, there was a red haired Caucasian soldier. He thanked me and when he shook hands with me, he left five dollars in my hand.

NAKAGAWA: Is that right? Wow!

GOTO: I could never forget that. But, I haven't seen Frank for the longest time. Maybe forty years had lapsed since then, and one day after that he got married and he has a very beautiful daughter that brought him over to see me here in Lodi. I sure appreciated that.

NAKAGAWA: Where was he living?

GOTO: He is living in Torrance, California.

NAKAGAWA: Down south. Southern California.

GOTO: He married a Japanese girl because he went back to Japan to do the interpreting as a soldier.

NAKAGAWA: I need to ask you something again, to check this out with you. You mentioned chow mein.

GOTO: Yes.

NAKAGAWA: A lot of Niseis tell me that they remember that at the time of evacuation the last meal they had before they left, before they got on the train to go to the assembly centers, was Chinese food.

GOTO: Is that right?

NAKAGAWA: Do you remember anything like that?

GOTO: I don't remember. No, you see, we were shipped, we were the first contingent that left Tanforan to Topaz. Taro was asked to be head of the group, and they had two hundred able-bodied men only. . . supposed to be men only to start the camp building, and so forth. So Taro said he wasn't going to leave the family behind. I take it back. There was one lady. She was a nurse. So professionals like doctor, nurses, and all the other handymen who can do anything. Able-bodied people were sent. Two hundred of them, and Taro was picked as the head of the group. Somebody has to do that kind of thing. So we were the only ones that went as a family.

That place Topaz was just like ashes. You just can't run. You stir up a big storm, so you have to walk gently. And then every bit of you, almost knee deep ash like dirt at first. And then, I remember Leo used to look at the window. First came storm, and then the rain, and then the sunshine. Forever, it was rotating like that.

NAKAGAWA: Kind of cycle.

GOTO: Yes, cycle all the time, and those able-bodied men all had stomach problems when they went to the camp, so I was busy making *okayu* (rice gruel) and I had to use *u me* (pickled plum) so I used to pass those around to the people who were so sick.

NAKAGAWA: It probably was great medicine for them too, right?

GOTO: Yes, I think so. Yes. Perhaps they didn't know where that was coming from, but that's okay. [Laughter]

NAKAGAWA: Okay. Then after you left camp you settled in Denver, and then there came a time when you left Denver. By the way, what was the name of the church in Denver back then?

GOTO: What is it now?

NAKAGAWA: Simpson United Methodist Church.

GOTO: Oh!

NAKAGAWA: Was it Simpson Church?

GOTO: No, no. Yes, it was a Japanese Methodist Church.

NAKAGAWA: It's that church, right?

GOTO: It's the church, but it wasn't Simpson then.

NAKAGAWA: It wasn't Simpson then.

GOTO: Simpson is a new area, I think they moved.

NAKAGAWA: Right. It is actually Arvada, which is a suburb of Denver.

GOTO: Yes.

NAKAGAWA: But the Simpson Church today is the church that came out of the church that your husband started?

GOTO: Yes. Right. Because until Taro started it, there wasn't any Nisei church because lot of people evacuated from, you know, moved to Denver. Then we started it and we had good time there.

NAKAGAWA: Who was the minister who followed your husband there?

GOTO: When we went there, it was Reverend Uyemura.

NAKAGAWA: George Uyemura?

GOTO: No, George Uyemura's uncle.

NAKAGAWA: His uncle?

GOTO: His uncle, yes, was a member, I mean the minister there. And of course, we had Issei. Taro went there and started a Nisei group, and then they built a new church. Since then, I think it has grown a lot. But they grew a lot because of the war time.

NAKAGAWA: How did the Denver Issei and Nisei react to you when you arrived there? I mean, they knew that you had gotten out of camp, right? Did they . . .

GOTO: They had a conference there, Annual Conference, and then Taro stayed there for half a year until the conference time. We went in-between and well, we just had to go around. We didn't have a car so we borrowed a . . . it was a Caucasian missionary there that used to help at that church. I have

forgotten his name, but anyway, we used to borrow his car.
We'd go around to the farmers and get free vegetables.
That's how I fed most of my soldiers on Sundays.

NAKAGAWA: Wow!

GOTO: Had a big salad, and without any income of any sort of
dollar, we didn't have, so we just had to survive with. . .

NAKAGAWA: With what you had.

GOTO: Yes, offering that they gave us.

NAKAGAWA: Most of the Japanese who came to church every Sunday,
what did they do for a living?

GOTO: Well, they were just new, came out of the camp. Oh, those
who were there before?

NAKAGAWA: Those who were there before.

GOTO: I see. Some were beauticians, and I think some had stores.

NAKAGAWA: So they were primarily small business people. In other
words, they weren't farmers?

GOTO: No, but then, they were all capable people that came out
first, those who left the camp. Those who could not,
stayed there. But those who had some talent, and some
business or secretary and things like that, they all came out
so they were capable.

NAKAGAWA: That is so similar to the exile in the old testament, Jewish.
During the exile the ones who had the talent were let out of
exile but helped the Babylonians. . .

- GOTO: Right, right. It was a rough time, but we had a good time being in such a predicament.
- NAKAGAWA: Just being out of camp.
- GOTO: Yes, yes. And we made lot of good friends that looked us up. Well, looked me up because Taro was already gone. After forty years, Frank Suzuki came to see me. I was so glad to see him. I was shocked that he had aged. I'm sure he was shocked that I have aged. But I had several different occasions that people looked me up after so many—thirty, forty years.
- NAKAGAWA: Wow! Once you left there, you came back to California?
- GOTO: Well, we came back to. . . we went out. We went to Denver, right? And then after that we went to Topaz, I mean Ontario, Oregon. And then from there we had to go to Spokane because they asked for us.
- NAKAGAWA: Okay.
- GOTO: So we were there until he became superintendent there. Then, we had to come back, so we didn't go back to San Francisco where we left. So I had all my things there, you know.
- NAKAGAWA: You were in Ontario, that means you ministered to the people in Hood River? Or was that a separate church?
- GOTO: No, Hood River is too far from Ontario.
- NAKAGAWA: Too far, okay.

- GOTO: That is closer to Portland, and we were about. . . Ontario is three hundred miles away from Portland.
- NAKAGAWA: You can tell I don't know my geography. [Chuckles]
- GOTO: Well, that's okay. But anyway, we had a good time in Ontario. You know, there are some old timers there that have to make their own tofu.
- NAKAGAWA: Even to this day?
- GOTO: Well, no, no.
- NAKAGAWA: Now they probably buy it at the store, right?
- GOTO: At that time there weren't any place to buy it, so old timers had a grinder to grind the beans. So when she makes hers, she makes my share of beans. What am I going to do with twenty of those squares of tofu? I was passing it out to everybody.
- NAKAGAWA: [Laughter] Right!
- GOTO: But we had good times and that's where I learned how to make *osenbei* (rice crackers) and then I taught them to Spokane church. So now they make those *osenbei* and make money on it.
- NAKAGAWA: Yeah. Well, even tofu, now it is a health food thing, right? Everybody into tofu for health food reason.
- GOTO: But now, its done for you, you don't need to make it. I even made it myself, rather Japanese kind of thing that they do in Ontario, so they have to make it. Like noodles. They

would give me eggs by the box. How many dozen in a box, so what do you do but you have to make something with it. I used to make noodles and dry them. Those country people are really. . .

NAKAGAWA: You were ahead of your time. See, now-a-days, tofu and pasta are the "in" foods. Right? [Chuckles] You were ahead of your time!

GOTO: We had good times because country people are kind and generous. [Dog howling in background drowned out voices.]

NAKAGAWA: Right. Okay, we are going to stop at this point for sound check.

[Interruption]

NAKAGAWA: We have completed the sound check and we will resume the interview again at this point.

Mrs. Goto, you mentioned that from Denver you went back to Spokane, or you came back from West Coast, and so we are now talking basically about resettlement. And so, what I would like you to do is continue by sharing with us some memories you have about what it was like to come back to the West Coast and resettle.

GOTO: Well, after Denver, we were shipped back to Ontario, Oregon. That is a new place where three missionaries had

a little Sunday school, and then we were sent there to start a church.

Every Sunday, I had my two boys, and I had to park them with another family of because our destination, Taro had to preach about five times. By the time we made the round trip we covered about one hundred seventy five miles. So, we'd eat our lunch while I'd drive, and he would be ready. And he'd speak at. . . first we'd start with Nyssa, a nearby church and Sunday school, and then we'd end up in Caldwell, Idaho. By the time we came back, we covered one hundred seventy five miles round trip.

NAKAGAWA: Now, your husband was preaching in English or Japanese?

GOTO: Both.

NAKAGAWA: In both.

GOTO: Because he was in missionary work in starting those churches. Before they had a Sunday school only, and then we start getting their parents, and so we started. Mainly Issei, because Nisei can speak English. They can go to any church.

We started that way so we have Ontario Methodist Church now. But we had a hard time because he had to preach about five times within a day, from morning until night. We came home at night, and then all that time my friend had to take care of my two boys. But I did all the

driving for him so that he could concentrate. We did that for how many, two years, until we were shipped to Spokane. But that is how we got started.

NAKAGAWA: I figure it's tough preaching once a week for fifteen or twenty minutes.

GOTO: [Laughter] Well, so we didn't have time to eat, so I always made a lunch so that Taro would have. . . because the distance is so far, fifty miles, and then. . .

NAKAGAWA: And the speed limits were lot less than today, too. Right?
[Chuckles]

GOTO: Well, I don't remember that, but I remember one time we hit a pheasant. We brought it home and we ate him.
[Laughter] And so, I had company.

NAKAGAWA: Well, that's being resourceful. The conservationists would be proud of you. [Laughter] The wild life people may not be, but the conservationist people would be.

GOTO: So we had a good time in any place where we had to really work. And to start a church is another thing, so we have many friends that I still cherish.

I finally had to give up my Christmas cards because give or take I had about two hundred that I used to give, and then they gave it to me, too. But it came to a point where I start writing the Christmas cards and a Merry Christmas, and pretty soon Happy New Year has to go on, and it ended

up with Happy Valentine, so I said, "Well, it's just gotta quit." So last year I had to quit because of my arthritis hand.

NAKAGAWA: Your husband became the first Japanese Superintendent of the Provisional Conference, and that was in 1949?

GOTO: Right. Yes.

NAKAGAWA: And that is why you came back to San Francisco?

GOTO: No, we came to Lodi.

NAKAGAWA: Oh, you came to Lodi. I'm sorry. Now technically then, his position would be the equivalent of a bishop, right, because he had the jurisdiction over a conference.

GOTO: Nine states, western jurisdiction.

NAKAGAWA: Nine states, western jurisdiction. Right.

GOTO: Yes, that is nine states that he was serving. And then once in a while he had to go back to New York and those days we didn't have enough money to fly, so he had a pass on the train. He traveled by train so he was gone nine months out of the year.

And then he would pass through Sacramento to go to a further destination, so I would make his meal, whatever he wanted to eat, and a change of clothes. I would drive to Sacramento and during his train stop, I would meet him and give him his meal, and he would give me those dirty clothes and I gave him the fresh ones. We did that for what, how many years? (1949 to 1964)

NAKAGAWA: You did that, beginning of 1949, right?

GOTO: Yes.

NAKAGAWA: Now, he was the Superintendent up until the Provisional Conference dissolved in 1964?

GOTO: Yes, that's right.

NAKAGAWA: Wow!

GOTO: So I had done lots of traveling early in the morning just to meet him at a certain place because he was always on the train. If it was the airplane it would be much easier. But then, there was no such funds available.

NAKAGAWA: How was your, ah, your social life, I guess is what I'm asking being the wife of the Superintendent of the Provisional Conference.

GOTO: Well, here in Lodi, there is no Japanese church so I belong to the Methodist Church, and I sang in the choir for about thirty five years. Finally I gave up because I couldn't handle all that music, because of my arthritis finger hand, and I was afraid that I might drop some music and that would be embarrassing. So I quit. Ten years ago when I had a big operation, I had to quit. And then I belonged to the choir, but I keep on singing in the choir without music, you know. And sometimes I sing a solo for them.

NAKAGAWA: How did. . . let me. . . that begs me to ask, how did it feel for you, having been brought up in a Japanese church all your

life and then your husband becomes the Superintendent of a Japanese Provisional Conference, but yet being here in Lodi, there were no Japanese churches which meant you had to go to a Caucasian church.

GOTO: Why sure.

NAKAGAWA: Did that cause any particular feeling?

GOTO: No.

NAKAGAWA: No?

GOTO: I missed the Japanese gatherings, but then, there was no other choice so I just tried to be active. I tried to participate. I hate to miss my choir, go to choir practice and miss any singing that morning, but I always said if I don't go to church today, I hope God will forgive me. I sang in the choir for a long, long time, that means you put in lot of time, Thursdays and then Sundays, too. But there is a time to quit, you know. There is never forever in anything. Sounds like a little mosquito crying. No use trying to sing. [Chuckles] But we had a good time.

And then I tried to watch all my neighbors. If they were sick, I would cook for them, and you know, I do try to help them. When Taro passed away I received a telegram from the President of the United States, and that came out in the newspaper. And my neighbor said, "We didn't know we

had such a distinguished neighbor." But, I know my neighbors real well.

NAKAGAWA: Which president was that?

[End Tape 1, Side 2]

[Begin Tape 2, Side 1]

NAKAGAWA: We are continuing the interview of Mrs Alice Goto on December 3, 1992, here at the residence of Mrs. Goto. This is Side number 1 of the Tape 2. What happened was side two on the other cassette ran out before we completed part of the last dialogue. So at this point we will pick up the continuation of that part of the interview. Starting from now.

Mrs. Goto, when the tape ran out on us I had asked you, "Who was the president who sent you a telegram upon the death of your husband?", and then before you answered the tape ran out. So tell us now the answer to the sixty four thousand dollar question.

GOTO: [Chuckles] Well, that was President Nixon.

NAKAGAWA: President Nixon. Okay.

GOTO: President Nixon era. I appreciated that very much. And one of the congressmen who is from Hawaii sent me a telegram, too.

NAKAGAWA: Okay. Would that have been Inouye?

GOTO: No. Right now I kind of can't remember his name, but he was Japanese American.

NAKAGAWA: From Hawaii?

GOTO: Hawaii.

NAKAGAWA: Hmm. Okay. Well, we are getting towards the conclusion of the interview, Mrs. Goto, and I first want to thank you for this opportunity. I have learned so much from this and others will learn so much upon reading this interview and those of us who get a chance to hear the tapes.

That leads me to the final question that I have, Mrs. Goto, and that is for my generation as well as the generation of your granddaughter Courtney, the Sansei, and for the Yonsei, and for the other generations that will follow, given just the wealth of the experience and all of the ups and downs that you had to go through in your life, what do you want to tell us. In other words, what are some of the important things you want to leave us with, some sage words of wisdom and advice that you can impart to us.

GOTO: Well, war is sad. Nobody wins. And evacuation is sad, too. But, I think there is good and bad. But then, for young people who went through what we all had to go through, which many of them failed, and I suppose failed miserably, but many of them rose above because of this experience and became such a person that contributes so much and learn to

GOTO:

walk a second mile for a lot of people because of this experience. And, I think that is very important.

I don't like to brag about my two boys, but we had a company. Mark brought home company from Concord to my home unannounced around eleven thirty, and I asked the fellows, "You had your lunch yet?" and they said, "No, we are going out to eat." I said, "Well, it won't take me about a minute to whip up a sandwich", and one fellow said, "That sounds good to me." So, I end up giving lunch for these fellows. On the way home one fellow thanked me and he praised up and down how nice my son is. He said, "How did you raise him, what did you feed him?" and all that kind of thing. And, he said, "But you have a nice son!". He thanked me for raising him and sharing him among us, and I thought, gee, that's the most compliment mothers can get from anybody, and that was that.

And then, some time ago my first son, Leo, had a severe heart attack so he had to retire from his work. About a year later they gave him a retirement party. It was an invitational party. The Old Sacramento was Leo's pet project so they had it right there on the wharf with five string instruments playing music, and under the big canopy they had finger food and a thank you party for Leo for serving with the, what was the name of that. . .

COURTNEY: The Redevelopment Agency?

GOTO: The Development and Redevelopment of Sacramento, he worked for, and the City of Sacramento gave him this party by the wharf, and then among all the . . . they had about three hundred fifty invitations, and all the ladies wore a black dress with white aprons on, and served us. It was warm so I was sitting under the shade on the corner, and then two fellows came to me and I don't know who they were, but they said the same thing for raising him, thanked me for raising him and then sharing him among them.

So I have two boys, but then those two boys have been . . . they really satisfied my feeling for raising them. When my husband passed away, before that we found he wrote his own eulogy. In it he thanked me for raising our boys superbly. So I thanked him for that, too. But I wish many mothers will receive such compliments as I have. And I sure appreciate that.

NAKAGAWA: The message you have then for Sansei and Yonsei and others is, "Children, listen to your mothers." [Chuckles]

GOTO: Yes, and I'm sure my two boys walk a second mile. Otherwise, they will not thank me. And that is very important for all these young people, to learn to walk a second mile. Anybody will walk a first mile because they

are friends, but the second and third mile you might have to spend your own money to do that, so they have to have compassion and learn to walk a second mile for others. Then I think it will be harmonious all the way around.

NAKAGAWA: Well, Mrs. Goto, I think it is only fitting that we close this interview with a biblical phrase, "Walking the second mile."

I want to thank you for this interview. This concludes our interview with Mrs. Alice Goto. This is Wednesday, December 3, 1992, and it is approximately three forty five in the afternoon.

[End Tape 2, Side 1]